

"There would seem to be great advantages . . . in preparing now for the time, only a few years hence, when the flood of college students will be at hand. And those preparations, to my mind, should consist primarily in the establishment of many local two-year colleges. They should be planned to attract the large majority of the youths who now enter a four-year course of study."

To its credit, Maryland heeded Dr. Conant's prophecy and advice, and today there are in operation in our State twelve community colleges, with eleven others in varying stages of planning.

In addition to this important development, first steps already have been taken for the conversion of the teachers colleges into liberal arts colleges. The General Assembly this year, you will recall, enacted legislation changing the names of the five colleges, placing them under a single board of trustees and in general setting up the machinery for broadening their spheres in compliance with the Curlett Commission recommendations. Although quite obviously these colleges have not as yet attained full status in liberal arts education, they are well under way on that course and we may expect that these objectives will be reached within the next few years.

This, then, is the system of public higher education that Maryland has established. Wrapping up the whole, and providing unity and coordination to a largely decentralized system, is an agency created by the General Assembly called the Advisory Council for Higher Education. The principal virtue of the system, as I see it, is in its functional diversity. We have instead of a monolithic system a pluralistic system, which in my opinion is, as have said, one of its virtues.

On this theme, let me quote from the report of the Curlett Commission.

"The State of Maryland," the report states, "has diverse needs in the field of higher education — a need for graduate and professional training at the highest level, for liberal arts and teacher education programs, and for two-year colleges which can perform a screening function for the entire system of public higher education, sending some students on for further education and equipping other with vocational skills through terminal programs."

It goes on to say:

,"The Commission believes that the organization of public higher education in this State should mirror and the need for diversity of function . . ."

And still quoting from the report: